

# Getting Ready

## Introduction

Each of the twelve steps and their related activities are necessary to develop and maintain an effective comprehensive emergency management program for your facility. Remember, your job is to **promote participation** in the disaster planning process. These steps can't and shouldn't be done by one person, and, yes, the process will take time - but the *process is most important*.

Two of the essential tasks of a professional manager are: (1) To set goals and intermediate objectives for the accomplishment of work, and (2) to effectively manage people and get them to help shoulder the burden through educating, motivating and monitoring their progress toward common goals.

Your primary vehicle for developing the emergency management program is the Emergency Preparedness Committee at your facility. They may feel their current program is excellent, and they may be correct. One of the activities of this chapter is to perform a Program Review. By asking the committee to complete this review as a group, they will be able to see areas where improvements can be made.

This chapter deals with how to use the information gained from this Program Review. Future activities

will be based upon priorities set by the committee locally. Your job is to define your facility's "Report Card" in regards to emergency management capability.

"The fundamental goal of Emergency Management is to create and maintain an effective organization to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from major threats to lives and livelihoods. A fundamental assumption is that plans alone are not effective unless they are supported by people and a process brought together by good management skills." <sup>1</sup>

## Facility Priorities and Goal Setting

### Priorities

Setting priorities is essential to creating an effective organization. By evaluating your program, you will identify areas of immediate (priority) need for development, updating or improvement. The rest of this manual outlines specific end products and proposes some objectives for each step of the overall process. An effective local program in all phases of community emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, will involve:

1. **Development and use of a multi-year strategic/work plan**, based on goals and attainable, measurable objectives and end-products

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- which guide the planning process;
2. **Generation and use of support from the Director;**
  3. **The identification, involvement and commitment of all Services** in the facility, as well as other key agencies and organizations in the community who have a role;
  4. **Professionalism**, including the use of knowledge from lessons learned, continual training and education, effective networking and communication with other Emergency Preparedness Coordinators/Area Emergency Managers and the development and use of good management skills;
  5. **A complete emergency operations plan** that is based on the ongoing planning process and which results in open communication, full participation, and real commitments of responsibility by personnel, not paper or "vacuum" plans known only by you;
  6. **An ongoing process of training, education and exercising**, documented in the plan, the planning process and in the multi-year development plan, which develops better and new capabilities among all Services and the community as a whole.

"Notice that the most traditional elements of emergency management--a written plan and periodic testing--are but two of many more "must-do" elements of effective CEM. The research is clear on this point, as is the advice from professional investigations by the International City Management Association, National Association of Counties, United States Conference of Mayors and National Governors Association:

*Plans without committed people, given clear responsibilities and new skills through an effective planning process, are worthless pieces of paper."*<sup>2</sup>

## Goals, Objectives and the Use of Workplans

### Why Should We Set Goals?

"Let's start with a simple example that anyone who has taken a group wilderness hiking will readily appreciate. Let's say you have a choice of routes to take up the mountain, and as the guide you choose a route that is direct but pretty much requires walking continuously in an area where no one can see what progress is being made. Under these conditions, mile after mile of the same trees and trail, most if not all of the group will begin to complain, lose faith that they can complete the trip or at the least have an non-enjoyable experience. Smart guides choose routes with some understanding of how people

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react. Choosing a more difficult trail with opportunities to look down a vista at the elevation the hikers just conquered actually produces better results ! Why? Because people have a sense of accomplishment--a reward--at each phase of the effort to climb that mountain ! They are given the opportunity to see where they are going and to know that progress is being made." <sup>3</sup>

**Goals are especially important in comprehensive emergency management. *Why?***

- o Because emergency management programs prepare organizations and communities for a problem that may not appear for a long period of time.
- o Goal-setting is a way of motivating people and improving their contributions. Without a clear idea of how each individual's effort is really helping to increase safety in the facility and its ability to survive, it is all too easy for people to feel they are wasting their time or become discouraged about the worth of their important effort!
- o Setting clear goals with challenging, but attainable intermediate objectives is essential to maintaining the process over the long-run.
- o Further, planning and managing by goals and objectives is essential to the Emergency

Preparedness Coordinator to measure how he or she is doing when there is not immediate final reward from a major operation.

Goal setting ought to be a basic feature of every facility's emergency management program, yet few even have a general plan for what they are trying to achieve! **The result is a program that drifts.** No one can determine whether progress is being made, and soon the essential participants feel that their time can be better spent elsewhere.

In the Preceptor Program, the use of goals, objectives and workplans is important for several reasons. First, as we have discussed in earlier sections, your ability to motivate your facility's Emergency Preparedness Committee members depends in part on clarifying your respective roles in the program, what the desired end products are, and by suggesting a "roadmap" the facility can use to accomplish the tasks necessary to reach the goals. Second, the status of each facility's program will be known at any given point in time (such as when JCAHO visits).

**Goals**

The goals of the Preceptor Program include meeting the standards that exist today in emergency management: supporting VA's missions, incorporating FEMA guidance and the lessons learned through the disaster research, applying Incident Command System

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(ICS) methods to managing emergency situations, meeting the JCAHO's requirements, and most importantly, *ensuring continuity of care*.

*Since all facilities are concerned with meeting JCAHO requirements, the program goal we will use is the JCAHO standards as the foundation for continuity of care.*

As you learned in the early sections, the establishment of goals is an important component of "*free choice*" which then advances to "*internal commitment*." However, we also learned that it isn't productive to ask beginners to participate initially in goal-setting (determining the means) because they can't visualize how to attain the ends desired. Some of your Committee members will be knowledgeable about the basics of emergency management, and some will not be. Further, each VA health care facility may be at a different point in developing its emergency management capability. One of the purposes for the Preceptor Program is to establish a "baseline" for all VA health care facilities, and provide the necessary guidance to assist all of these facilities in working towards it.

## Objectives

Building an effective program may involve a twelve-step process of program development and maintenance. The first eleven steps develop capability and the final step maintains it. Each step is a *terminal*

objective, or a defined activity, product or service. How each step is accomplished is through a set of tasks, which are *enabling* objectives, or strategies. While accomplishment of the terminal objectives (steps) is largely structured, how a facility decides to accomplish them is only suggested. These "task strategies," (enabling objectives) must be defined by the facility for the facility based upon local priorities.

For example, in Step Four, Developing a Resource Identification/Inventory, the program requirement (terminal objective) is that each facility has a listing of internal and external resources that is created so as to be usable in an emergency. While this manual provides suggested task strategies, how the EPC accomplishes it is left up to him or her.

## Workplans

There are three kinds of workplans: a 3-year Program Overview (Worksheet A), a 3-year Step Workplan (Worksheet B), and a Detailed Step Workplan (Worksheet C).

Worksheet A, the 3-year Program Overview, describes the time requirements and products of the overall CEM program development phase. Each step, then, would be broken down in greater detail on Worksheet B, listing the various tasks necessary, time requirements, and annual review dates. Worksheet C allows for greater

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detailing of the various tasks, and serves as the "working draft."

The idea behind the Workplans is simply to organize who is doing what and by when. They allow the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and others to easily determine the status of the facility's program.

Each of the remaining chapters contain Workplans which suggest some of the tasks necessary to complete each of the twelve steps. *Feel free to adapt any of the suggested strategies to meet your needs.*

As you work through the process with the others in your facility, don't forget to provide feedback. Goals are worthless without periodic praise or constructive criticism to the participants that your program depends on.

## Notes:

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<sup>11</sup> Erwin, Charles, LaValla, Patrick and Stoffel, Robert, **Community Emergency Management: Program Development and Strategies**, Emergency Response Institute, Inc., Olympia, WA. 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.